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ABSTRACT

This collection of poems by contemporary poets stretches across the boundaries of skin color, ethnicity, language, and religion to give voice to the lives and experiences of ethnic Americans. The poems address common themes of assimilation, self-perception, and communication. In recording everyday life in the many American cultures, the poems displace the myths and stereotypes that pervade America. The collection is organized to address the instability of American identity and confront the prevalence of cultural conflict and exchange within the United States, and to highlight the constant erecting, blurring, breaking, and crossing of boundaries that are a consequence of the complex intersections among peoples, cultures, and languages within national borders, which themselves are revised constantly. The collection is organized thematically into 5 extensive sections: (1) Uprooting; (2) Performing; (3) Naming; (4) Negotiating; and (5) Re-Envisioning. Poems in the collection are by Amiri Baraka, Louise Erdrich, Ishmael Reed, Marge Piercy, Naomi Shihab Nye, Ntozake Shange, and Lorna Dee Cervantes, among others. The collection concludes with brief biographies of the poets. (NKA)

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